

THE PELHAM

# PATHWAY

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**Pelham**

A path apart.



# GOLD MEDAL MOMENT

BY: AINSLEY ALLISON



The eyes of the world will be on Birmingham and surrounding cities in less than a month when The World Games 2022 commence. The impact will be significant, as an anticipated 3,600 elite athletes from over 100 countries come to Alabama to compete for gold in 34 of the fastest growing sports in the world.

The World Games 2022 run from July 7-July 17. While Birmingham is the host city, Pelham will have its gold medal moment on the international stage. Pelham's beautiful Oak Mountain State Park is an official venue for several outdoor competitions.

"The Pelham Racquet Club has had an international following for many years. It's time we share Oak Mountain State Park with the rest of the world," said Mayor Gary W. Waters.

"The opportunity to be featured on a global platform is a phenomenal and rare occasion for the Alabama State Parks system," said Anna Jones, the park's Event Coordinator.

"We are beyond ready to debut Oak Mountain State Park to the world and are grateful for the potential exposure The World Games will bring to not only the park but also our local community," Jones added.

Jay Kasten, Chief Operating Officer for The World Games 2022, was quick to praise Oak Mountain State Park as a venue. "Oak Mountain State Park is an Alabama treasure that is the ideal location to host several outdoor competitions of The World Games 2022, including Waterskiing, Wakeboarding, Canoe Marathon, and Middle Distance Orienteering. The park is a beautiful backdrop for these events, and its proximity to Birmingham is a huge plus for the thousands of visitors from all over the world who will be coming to witness these thrilling competitions."

The World Games is an eleven-day international multi-sport event organized with the support of the International Olympic Committee. It is typically held the year following the Summer Olympic Games and had been scheduled for July of 2021.

In April 2020 at the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, The World Games were officially postponed to 2022. Those involved in the planning are beyond ready to see the games begin.



"It's going to be the biggest sports party in state history," said Nick Sellers, Chief Executive Officer for The World Games 2022. "It's the perfect way for humanity to reconnect as we continue to grapple with the new normal brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic. For fans, it provides a chance to witness history."

"After years of planning, we are thrilled to see the vision of the City of Birmingham hosting The World Games come to fruition. The World Games has not been held in the United States since its initial founding in 1981, so having Oak Mountain State Park as a venue to host these prestigious games is truly incredible," exclaimed Jones.

During The World Games, you will have an opportunity to watch sports and sporting disciplines that are not contested in the Olympics. The World Games are governed by the International World Games Association, under the patronage of the International Olympic Committee. In fact, the President of the International Olympic Committee, Thomas Bach, has confirmed he will attend The World Games 2022.

"We're very honored that the President of the International Olympic Committee will be joining us at The World Games 2022. This is another sign of the significance of the Games and its strong connection to the Olympics," said Jonathan Porter, Chairman of the Board for The World Games 2022. "The International Olympic Committee is a tremendous supporter of everything we are doing in Birmingham to make this edition of The World Games the best ever."

According to the Rules of The World Games, athletes are selected to compete by their sport's international federation, as opposed to their sport's national governing body or National Olympic Committee.

Oak Mountain State Park will host four outdoor competitions. Let's break it down.

## WATERSKIING

Waterski has three different categories: Slalom, Trick, and Jump.

### Slalom

In Slalom, skiers use only one ski and must navigate around a six-buoy course in order to complete the pass. The boat speed is fixed, but the rope length is not. With each successful pass, the length of the rope is shortened. The skier who successfully passes around the most buoys on the shortest rope wins.

### Trick

In Trick, skiers use small, oval-shaped skis. Skiers get two 20-second runs to perform a series of pre-selected tricks. One pass is for hand tricks, which include surface turns, rotations over the wake, and flips. The second pass includes toe tricks, which are performed by completing wake turns and rotations with only a foot attaching them to the handle. A trick cannot be repeated and each has a specific point value. The skier with the most points wins.

### Jump

In Jump, skiers use two long skis to ride over a jump ramp in an attempt to travel the longest distance. As a skier approaches the ramp, the skier will zigzag behind the boat in a series of cuts to generate speed and angle and will hit the base of the jump ramp at a near-right angle to the boat. The winner is the skier who travels the farthest calculated distance and successfully rides away.

\*SOURCE: [www.twg2022.com](http://www.twg2022.com)





## WAKEBOARDING

Wakeboard has just one category in The World Games, and that is Freestyle.

### Freestyle

Wakeboard is considered a mixture of water skiing, snowboarding, and surfing. Jumps are performed by riding up the wake and launching into the air. While in the air, the rider attempts to do tricks. The rider is permitted one fall during his two passes. Judges award points for three elements: execution, intensity, and composition. The rider who gains the highest score wins.

## CANOE

There are two disciplines of Canoe in The World Games: Canoe Polo and Canoe Marathon.

### Canoe Marathon

In Canoe Marathon, the competitor races over a long-distance course on water that is not subject to prescribed standards. The competitor must take the water as it is found and be prepared, if necessary, to carry his or her kayak around an impassable obstacle or between two waterways.

Both short distance and standard distance Canoe Marathon competitions will take place at Oak Mountain State Park's Double Oak Lake, along with Waterskiing and Wakeboarding.

## ORIENTEERING

The World Games 2022 will include three disciplines of orienteering: Middle Distance, Sprint, and Sprint Relay.

Orienteering is a sport that combines racing with navigation. It is a timed race in which participants use a specially created, highly-detailed map to navigate through diverse and unfamiliar terrain to visit control points in sequence. The control site circles are centered on the feature that is to be found. This feature is also defined on a list that athletes receive along with their map. Out in the terrain, a control flag marks the location that the orienteer must visit. To verify a visit, the orienteer uses an electronic "punch" using a finger stick with a chip inside that records their time at each control they visit. The route between controls is not specified and is entirely up to the orienteer.

### Middle Distance

Middle Distance Orienteering is a shorter cross-country race than the classic. With the fastest winning time around 30 minutes, it places an emphasis more on fine navigation rather than route-choice navigation.

\*SOURCE: [www.twg2022.com](http://www.twg2022.com)





## Detailed Planning

Years of planning across multiple cities and jurisdictions have brought us to this point. The #RoadtoBHM began in June 2014, when the City of Birmingham officially announced its bid for The World Games. The IWGA chose Birmingham the next year. Then-Birmingham Mayor William Bell traveled to Wroclaw, Poland, and participated in the closing ceremonies of The World Games 2017.

Over the course of the last year, Pelham public safety personnel have worked with local, state, and federal partners to prepare to host the world across central Alabama. The security level for The World Games 2022 is compared to that of a Super Bowl happening in multiple locations daily for eleven days.

"A ton of planning has gone into this event, especially for public safety. Our police officers will be working diligently to make sure that attendees and Pelham residents have a safe experience and smooth traffic flow," said Pelham Police Chief Pat Cheatwood.

When asked what advice he would offer locals during The World Games, Cheatwood encouraged patience and hospitality. "We anticipate increased amounts of traffic, with visitors stopping at local fuel stations, restaurants, and hotels. We ask that everyone remain patient with each other and with the officers assisting with traffic," he said. "We are very excited for our city to be showcased worldwide, during The World Games 2022. We should all be proud of Pelham and the many attributes that it provides. We are excited to share those attributes with so many visitors."

Pelham Fire Chief Mike Reid agreed. "We are very excited to be hosting several sporting events during The World Games 2022," Reid said. "We look forward to representing our city in the best way possible on the world stage."

The Pelham Fire Department will support The World Games venue at Oak Mountain State Park with medical, water rescue, and HAZMAT support if needed. Our firefighters are highly skilled in technical rescue services, such as rope rescue, confined space rescue, dive rescue and recovery, and hazardous materials response.



## Singing Spotlight

Our pristine state park is not the only place Pelham will shine during The World Games 2022. Two Pelham City Schools students auditioned and were selected to be in The World Games 2022 Youth Choir.

Lexi Lowery is a rising junior at Pelham High School. She has a passion for music and hopes to pursue a career in the industry. Not only does she take regular lessons, but she also participates in music at school.

"Lexi has sung since she was a young girl," said her mother Jaime Lowery. "She would sing for senior citizens, and she was a member of the Pelham Park Middle school choir and musical theater. Her teacher, Mrs. Norris, was a great influence and encouraged her passion for music," she added.

Lexi is a part of the theatre department at Pelham High School, and she performed in the spring school musical. She will perform on a much larger stage in just a matter of weeks.

"She didn't know if she would make it into the Youth Choir when she auditioned because the call to audition was broad," explained Jaime Lowery. "Not only did we find out that she had made it into the Youth Choir, but she was also chosen to be a part of the Elite Choir. Only 25 were chosen, and Lexi was one of those."



The Elite Choir will perform in the Opening and Closing Ceremonies at Protective Stadium. It also recorded a backup track for The World Games 2022 theme song, *"Hope of Alabama."*

"I did not know anyone going into the rehearsals until later I saw a girl who is in 8th grade at Pelham Park Middle School," said Lexi Lowery. "We have learned a few songs along with some of the adult choirs. It's so fun to work with such a diverse group of kids and adults. This is the biggest event I've been a part of for music. I cannot wait to sing at the games and be a part of this special experience."

The girl she saw from Pelham Park Middle School was 14-year-old Maddie Rasco. According to her mother, Crystal, music has been an integral part of her life.

"At the age of seven, Maddie was watching the Super Bowl pregame show and decided she could sing the national anthem better than the artist on TV," her mother laughed. "She preceded to belt out her version of the song, and it left me in tears. How could such a big and beautiful sound come from such a small little body? Her voice has always been bigger than her age. We knew at that moment, that God was going to use her for something special."

Maddie's parents enrolled her in piano and voice lessons that same month, and she has been with a piano and vocal coach ever since. She regularly sings the national anthem for the Birmingham Barons and around the Pelham community. Crystal Rasco said the choice to audition for The World Games 2022 Youth Choir was easy.

In March, Maddie participated in the official music video for the theme song. "Participating in the music video recording was a really cool experience because I got to meet people from all over," said Maddie Rasco. I got to meet the CEO of The World Games 2022, as well as the artistic director for the games! Those are important people!"

Maddie will not sing in the Opening nor Closing Ceremonies. In April, she tried out for and was selected to be a member of the Pelham High School dance team. Due to the demanding nature of both The World Games and dance practice schedules, she had to make a choice.

"Many of the practice times conflicted with the other, and Maddie had to make a difficult decision to choose only one. In the end, she chose the dance team because it was something she has dreamed of and prepared for years to do," her mother explained. "As a mom, I'm so proud of her for making this decision. It shows a level of maturity, that sometimes we have to walk away from something amazing in order to grow in another area."



Lexi Lowery will participate in The World Games 2022 Opening and Closing Ceremonies as a member of the Elite Youth Choir.



Maddie Rasco (right) with her mom Crystal and The World Games 2022 mascot Vulcan.

"While I'm not going forward with the final performances in the games, I proved to myself that I can make a tough decision and be okay with it," Maddie explained. "Being chosen to sing in The World Games 2022 Youth Choir made me a more confident performer."

Tickets are on sale now for both the Opening and Closing Ceremonies, as well as all of the sporting events. Find more information at [www.twg2022.com](http://www.twg2022.com).



## Sweet Spotlight

In April, entrepreneur Jennifer Dimbo learned her Pelham-based business Nana Bakes was selected as an official The World Games 2022 vendor.

In 2019, the World of Opportunity program kicked off. A supplier diversity initiative, it offers local, small, minority-owned, and women-owned organizations the chance to be involved in current and future city-wide business opportunities.

Jennifer Dimbo worked full-time as a project manager for a major insurance company, but she always had a love for baking. As her cakes, brownies and other baked goods gained a following, Dimbo took a leap of faith, left her job, and started her company, Nana Bakes.

Dimbo is "Nana" to Mackinzie, the inspiration for her company logo. "My grandbaby is the face of Nana Bakes," said Dimbo. "I did this for her."

Dimbo's scratch-made Mason jar desserts are a huge hit with her customers. Her "Stuck in the Middle" jar sells for \$12 and is available in strawberry, lemon, banana pudding, Key lime, and red velvet. The brownie jar flavors include Sassy Nana and Buster Brown. The jars are sold at the kitchen located in the Alpine Square Shopping Center Monday through Friday from 9:00 am to 6:00 pm, as well as in nine locations in the Birmingham metro. Her cakes and other desserts are made to order.

Nana Bakes recently won the award for "Best Dessert" at the 2022 Taste of Pelham.



Nana Bakes was voted Best Bite in the Dessert Category at the 2022 Taste of Pelham.



Nana Bakes is famous for its Mason jar desserts.



**The World Games**  
2022 BIRMINGHAM, USA

Canoe Marathon  
July 10-11

Waterski & Wakeboard  
July 14-July 16

Orienteering  
July 15-July 17



@TWG2022BHM



# IN PICTURES



Carolyn Ansari (USA) & Ariana Arseneault (CAN) won the Pelham Racquet Club Women's \$60,000 Pro Classic in doubles play.



Maria Lourdes Carle (ARG) won the Pelham Racquet Club Women's \$60,000 Pro Classic in singles play.



Approximately 140 tennis players representing 29 states competed in the NTRP National Championship Tournaments the first two weekends in April.



The Pelham Racquet Club was one of three locations in the nation chosen to host NTRP National Championship Tennis Tournaments. Pelham hosted the 55+ age bracket.





Dreamcatcher performed on the main stage as the opening act at Pelham Palooza.



Boy Scout Troop 404 offered activities for children at their tent at Pelham Palooza.



Pelham's Active Adults took a day trip to Wild Animal Safari in Pine Mountain, GA.



Pelham High School hosted Youth Soccer Night for rec league teams.



Hula-hoops were a hit among adults and young people at Pelham Palooza.



# GOING BEYOND THE FIELD

BY: GINA WOMACK

Saturday, March 12th, was the day Old Man Winter decided to make us question if spring had really arrived in Central Alabama. With opening day for Pelham Youth Baseball scheduled for the following week, the frigid temperatures did not deter the 10U Pelham Pirates baseball team from a planned day of community volunteer work at the Shelby County Humane Society. As about eight boys and their parents tumbled out of mini-vans and SUVs, excitement was high as the team entered the doors of the animal shelter.

Michael Yonosko, the team's head coach, said the idea for community service came about as he considered all the people who help make it possible for the boys to play baseball.

"Before the first pitch is even thrown, many people are working behind the scenes to allow us to play. The umpires, the coaches, the people running the snack bar – all of those people play a role in what we do," he explained. "As a team, we discussed how many people from across the city give their time to youth sports. We decided that when we're not playing baseball, we could do our part to give back to the community around us."

Yonosko said he wanted to choose a cause that was age-appropriate. Given the fact that most of the boys were animal lovers, he reached out to the Shelby County Humane Society to see if the team could volunteer.

Katrina Davis is the Public Relations Coordinator at the Shelby County Humane Society. She said volunteers are essential to their operation due to the large number of animals in the shelter at any given moment.

"We average between 200-300 dogs and 25-100 cats in the shelter. The staff does their best to ensure each pup and kitty is attended to, but it can be overwhelming. Volunteers can provide love and attention one-on-one with the animals. This helps de-stress the animals, which ultimately improves their chances of being adopted." She added that dogs and cats that are more sociable, loving, and playful will better attract potential adopters.





On this chilly March afternoon, Alexis Martinez, Volunteer Coordinator with Shelby Humane, welcomed the Pelham Pirates and gave them an introduction to volunteer duties at the shelter. She showed them how to properly leash a dog, and how to handle the canine while on a walk. In addition to walking the dogs, the boys were shown how to clean the puppy cages, and how to bathe them. Some of the boys visited the cats and spent some time loving and cuddling them. The boys took some of the dogs to outdoor play areas and played fetch. "What do you think? Shortstop? Second base?" Yonosko said to one of his players as he sized up one dog's ability to field a ball.

When asked what he hoped the boys would gain from the day of volunteerism, Yonosko smiled. "I'm hoping they're going to take away that it's always good to help out. We talked about living in the Pelham community, and how it takes a team of people to make a city like Pelham run. We compared that to how it takes teamwork to have success on the field. We're hoping they draw that connection. We're just hoping to share with this generation what it means to be part of a community like the one we have here."

Kyle Lubsen is one of the assistant coaches of the Pelham Pirates. He and his son Josh participated in the volunteer day.

"It's great that the kids can do something together outside of baseball and learn how they can contribute. We want them to realize that to be a good person, they need to be doing more than just sports and school. It goes beyond the field."

Josh, a student at Pelham Ridge Elementary, enjoyed walking the dogs. When asked if he found a dog he'd like to take home, he said, "I saw a lot of dogs I'd like to take home. Dad says we have two dogs at home, and one of them needs knee surgery."

Katrina Davis is happy the Pelham Pirates chose to spend a day at the Shelby County Humane Society. She believes it's important to educate children about animal welfare at a young age. "Volunteering with an animal shelter will not only provide valuable lessons in animal care but will help ensure better pet owners in the future."

As Yonosko and some of his guys closed the day by helping to bathe puppies, the coach deemed the volunteer outing a success. "I think it's been an amazing day. It kind of makes me wonder why we haven't done this before."



### Volunteers needed for Pelham Youth Sports

While the Pelham Pirates were spending the day volunteering at the Shelby County Humane Society, the Pelham Parks and Recreation staff was looking for volunteers for youth sports programs offered by the department.

Volunteer coaches are the backbone of the Pelham Parks and Recreation's youth sports leagues, and more people are always needed to step up to the plate. Jared Thornton and Charlie Sanders coordinate volunteers for the various programs offered by Pelham Parks and Recreation.

"Without all of our volunteers, these kids wouldn't be able to play. Someone has to be the coach and teach and mentor these kids about the game. Our staff can't do it all, so having these volunteers step up to coach is important. We are grateful to have a great community with volunteers who are willing to spend their precious time to be there for the kids," said Thornton.

Richard Poff has been a Pelham youth baseball and basketball coach for about two years. "There are zero reasons not to become a volunteer and a thousand reasons to become one. You can't possibly imagine what rewards are waiting for you until you walk through that door. It's an experience that is beyond compare."

Coaches like Poff and Yonosko said they volunteered to be directly involved with the activities of their sons' teams.

"That, and my extremely fond memories of playing sports when I was growing up. Even though I am 52, I still remember a lot of the great coaches I had, and how much fun it was being on their teams," said Poff.



While prior experience as a coach is not a requirement for Pelham youth sports, most head coaches played the sport during childhood, high school, and even college, or at least have a working knowledge of the sport.

"I feel like I can pass the best parts of my personal experience on to my son's team. I'm thrilled to have the chance to volunteer," Poff added. "Being a coach is like a time travel machine. It always takes me back to my playing days."

Both men acknowledge coaching a youth team requires a time commitment of six to seven hours a week for a sport like spring baseball. Yonosko said as a small business owner, his schedule allows for more flexibility than many working parents. "You must have the time, availability, and willingness to do the job. It's my pleasure to put in a few extra hours if it means being able to offer a better product to the kids and families that participate."

When asked about the challenges many youth coaches face, Poff said, in his experience with Pelham organizations, true problems are few and far between. "Pelham Parks and Recreation makes it super-easy (for coaches). They have everything you need and are extremely organized and well-led. Most of what I face are not big challenges. It's sort of like driving to the beach or Disney World. (The long drive) is a small price to pay for a big reward."

Once a child enrolls to participate in one of many of Pelham's youth sports offerings, he or she will be taught and guided by not only the dedicated coaches and other volunteers in the Parks and Recreation programs, but they will also have a chance to take advantage of the synergy between youth sports and Pelham City Schools.

For example, youth wrestling is a first-year offering for Pelham Parks and Recreation. One reason the opportunity exists is the program has piggybacked off the success of the Pelham High School program. Similarly, the Pelham High School baseball team recently hosted a youth baseball clinic. Youngsters had a chance to work with coaches and players on hitting and fielding. Pelham High School's varsity and junior varsity cheerleaders host a cheer camp each summer to kick off practice for youth cheer squads. A child who begins in Pelham's youth sports programs can hone his or her skills for high school and beyond. "One of my favorite things is going to high school games and seeing the kids that I've coached years before performing on a bigger stage," said Yonosko.

If you are interested in an opportunity to serve the Pelham community and our youth, Yonosko has this bit of advice: "Don't wait until you think you're ready to start. Just dive in! There are so many roles from assistant coaching to team mom that are great starting points to get in and learn the ropes. I assisted for three seasons before I signed up to head coach."

Besides volunteer coaches and parents, Pelham Parks and Recreation's Jared Thornton wanted to raise awareness for an additional need related to youth sports.

"Another shortage we are experiencing is the need for sports officials. This is a paid opportunity. If anyone wants to learn more on how to become a referee or official, we can direct you to outside organizations that we use to staff our games. Like volunteers, without officials, we can't hold our games, and the kids can't play."





# MEET THE BEAT

BY: GINA WOMACK



BEAT is an acronym you will start to hear quite often in Pelham. The Pelham BEAT is a non-profit corporation formed in 2021. Its mission is to support, nurture, and promote the arts, cultural organizations, community beautification, entertainment, and artists in the City of Pelham, enhancing the quality of life for residents and visitors and promoting economic growth.

BEAT stands for Beautification, Entertainment, and Arts Team. It is a combined group of the former Pelham Beautification Board, along with a new focus on arts, entertainment, culture, and recreational opportunities.

As a non-profit organization, the BEAT will sponsor music and art-related events, contests, festivals, classes, and seminars in hopes of encouraging passion, camaraderie, and most of all, participation from residents. The organization hopes its efforts will promote economic growth by drawing visitors to the area.

The origins of the Pelham BEAT are rooted in an aspect some people felt the city was lacking. Neville Peacock, Pelham resident and member of the BEAT Board of Directors said, "Residents had already been discussing the absence of an official arts council in Pelham. Most surrounding towns have already organized arts councils, which are active and successful in offering unique opportunities for citizens to enjoy."

Pelham City Council President Maurice Mercer echoed Peacock's thoughts. "Having the BEAT will allow the organization to hold events and solicit funds from sponsors to help bring events to Pelham. In our neighboring cities, the Alabaster Arts Council is behind City Fest, and in Helena, the Business Association brings in the Buck Creek Festival. Both of these events cost several thousand dollars and the event can be offset by donations from the sponsors that the non-profit secures."

Mercer went on to say he's heard from Pelham residents who want more options. "For many years residents have said how much they wanted to see more events in the city."

While we have added Pelham Palooza, Taste of Pelham, and Movies in the Park, there is still a gap. Having the BEAT in place, as well as the new entertainment districts, we can work together to bring more entertainment options for residents and visitors alike to enjoy."

After months of discussion, planning, and obtaining support from the City of Pelham, a vision for the BEAT began to materialize. On April 27, 2021, incorporation documents were signed to form "The BEAT", a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. In March 2022, the Pelham City Council voted to abolish the Beautification Board, which paved the way for the merger of the two groups.



Chad Leverett is the President of the BEAT. He said community activities organized by the organization will be funded by individual and corporate memberships, sponsorships, and ticket sales for events. Board members anticipate there will be opportunities for the organization to apply for grants. Leverett stated the majority of the funds raised through memberships and sponsorships will go to the planning and coordination of bringing events to the city.



"We have visions of dinner theatre, murder mystery dinners, classes for various forms of art, and possible scholarships." A smaller portion of the money raised will go to nominal administrative costs such as website maintenance, tax filings, and print materials for events. Since all members of the BEAT Board of Directors are volunteers, no income will be used for salaries.

The BEAT membership drive officially begins this month. Individual memberships are \$30, and family memberships are \$50. Higher levels of membership include Contributor at \$250, Sponsor at \$500, and Benefactor at \$1,000. Leverett added the group is constantly working to provide added value to those who purchase memberships.

"Without members and funding, there would be no arts council. This council is determined to provide benefits to our members." Some of the perks of membership include BEAT-logoed items and discounts from local businesses, which Leverett hopes to continually add to the list.

The first 50 members will receive a one-day pass to Oak Mountain State Park, which will admit all passengers in a vehicle. Eventually, when the BEAT begins hosting events like dinner theatres and art classes, members will receive discounted tickets. When the renovations are complete at City Hall, the BEAT plans to have a wall designated to showcase local art.

"Civic-minded individuals will want to join Pelham BEAT, especially since it is a non-profit organization created to make Pelham a better place to live. Cultural and entertainment opportunities rank high on the list of standards people look for when choosing a home," explained Peacock. "As the BEAT grows, we will offer more frequent and larger events that will appeal to a broad range of people. This will draw visitors to our city, which then boosts income for local businesses and the tax revenue for Pelham. Additionally, residents of all ages will be exposed to cultural opportunities, without leaving town."

The first big event for the BEAT is The Pelham Games, a community-wide celebration that will serve as a tie-in to The World Games. The Pelham Games will take place July 9th at Pelham City Park and will incorporate at least four different competitions.



Leverett is optimistic about the possibilities for the Pelham BEAT. "By broadening our city's culture, social and economic development through art appreciation, education, entertainment, theatre, and activities like The Pelham Games, we'll have a chance to revitalize, diversify, and strengthen our community through beautification, arts, and entertainment."

For more information or to get involved, visit the group's website at [www.pelhambeat.org](http://www.pelhambeat.org). You can also keep up with the latest BEAT news on the group's Facebook page.



# GET TO KNOW DR. LEDBETTER

## Superintendent of Pelham City Schools

Over the last six months, a transition of leadership has been taking place within the Pelham City School system. Last fall, Dr. Scott Coefield announced his plans to retire in June. Under Dr. Coefield's leadership, the school system grew out of its infancy and developed the identity we all know: The Pelham Way.

"I think that if you had to sum up Dr. Coefield's tenure with one statement, it would be just that - The Pelham Way," said Pelham Board of Education President Rick Rhodes. "Scott gave us leadership, guidance, and expertise at a most crucial time. His presence was the catalyst that allowed us to establish and develop our school system in a most effective manner."

After an extensive search and interview process, the Pelham Board of Education selected Dr. Chuck Ledbetter as the system's new superintendent. We want you to have an opportunity to get to know Dr. Ledbetter a little more.

### What made you interested in joining Pelham City Schools?

Kim and I had multiple reasons to be interested in Pelham. From a professional standpoint, it was a uniquely good fit for us because it is a relatively new system, and having been in Pike Road for five years allows an understanding of the opportunities and challenges a new system faces. I knew that the school system has benefited from the strong leadership of Dr. Scott Coefield for eight years and that it is one of the best school systems in Alabama.

The commitment from the Board of Education and the community to have a great school system is clear, and that very much aligns with my belief that we should be the best we can be in whatever we do, be it academics, arts, or athletics, and prepare each student for a successful future.



The Pelham community also has a unique feel, providing the desirable culture of a small town in the hills with easy access to all advantages the city has to offer. An added personal benefit is we have children and grandchildren in the Birmingham area.

### Tell us a little bit about your vision for what's next for Pelham City Schools.

Our world is changing fast, particularly in the areas of what we do for work and the technologies involved in work, travel, and communication. We cannot know what the jobs our second graders will get 15 years from now will require as far as specific skills, so we must be preparing all our students to enjoy learning, be problem solvers, and be effective communicators. If they are adept at these skills, they will be able to learn whatever they need for new opportunities. Also, though our world is changing fast, human nature doesn't change. We need to prioritize relationships and caring for those around us, teaching all of us to serve others to make our world a better place.



### What are some things that you'd like the Pelham community to know about you?

I am excited to be part of the Pelham family! I grew up in Auburn when it was a small town, and have always appreciated the comradery and connectedness of small towns. In my first superintendency in Dublin, Georgia, I learned how vital the school system is to economic development, and I look forward to working with our leaders in Pelham to ensure that the school system is a great partner.

### You're just getting to know Pelham, but are there some things you see as similarities to your previous school system in Pike Road, and are there things that appear as differences?

There are many similarities between the two school systems. One advantage both share is that both systems have very diverse student populations, economically and ethnically. This allows our students to understand and work effectively with people who have different backgrounds or cultures than themselves. When our students go out into the "real" world, they are ready to work with and value all people.

One difference between the two systems is that Pike Road is not only a new system but also a new town. They are just beginning to build the business community that Pelham already has.



Dr. Chuck Ledbetter with his wife, Kim.

### What do you love most about your career in education?

I have been greatly blessed to have a career in education. I have been able to make so many friends and be a part of so many lives over the years, sharing in the joys of success and in the tears of struggle. It is truly a gift to be allowed to do something that makes a difference in the lives of people. As a teacher and coach, I got to experience those battles and victories daily. As a system leader, I have the opportunity to pull people together to implement ideas that have a broadly positive effect on students and their families and to lead in uniting all of our community in a shared vision for education. The feedback loop is slower now, but the joy is just as sweet as we see our students excel.

### What do you like to do when you're not working?

I love to go to Lake Martin with my family, cook out, travel, and learn about new things. I enjoy sports, theatre, and music as well.



# PANTHER PRIDE



The City of Pelham congratulates the Class of 2022!

**Class of 2022 Graduation Walk**  
The Class of 2022 donned caps and gowns and continued the graduation walk tradition at Pelham Oaks and Pelham Ridge.



**Character in Action**  
Each year, the Character in Action Award is given to one student from each school who positively impacts their school and community.



(L-R) Erica Jackson, 8th grader at Pelham Park Middle School, Koa Thompson, 5th grader at Pelham Oaks Elementary, Superintendent Dr. Scott Cofield, Nyssa Wynn, 5th grader at Pelham Ridge Elementary, and Avery Fuller, Pelham High School senior.



## Fifth Graders Visit Washington, D.C.

Over 100 students, parents, and teachers embarked on a jam-packed journey to our nation's capital last month. The group spent five days taking in the sights and learning about our country's history. They also visited Williamsburg and Jamestown, VA.



Pelham Oaks Elementary students, teachers, and parents stop for a photo in front of the U.S. Capitol building.



Pelham Ridge Elementary students, teachers, and parents stop for a photo in front of the U.S. Capitol building.



Payton Smith (second from left) with co-workers at Pelham Oaks Elementary.



Tonya Hatch (second from left) with co-workers at Pelham High School.

## Teachers Earn National Board Certification

National Board Certification is a rigorous process and a highly reputable credential for teachers who are committed to excellence. Three Pelham teachers recently achieved this certification.



Rebekah Davenport at Pelham Oaks Elementary.



# 2022 CITIZEN SURVEY

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BY: AINSLEY ALLISON

Each day that City of Pelham employees come to work, they do it because they have a heart for serving others. The City ensures its employees are highly skilled in their respective fields and offers continued training in order to provide the highest quality services to the citizens of Pelham.

Former Secretary of State and Birmingham native Condoleeza Rice summed up perfectly what it is like to work in public service.

**"There's no greater challenge and there is no greater honor than to be in public service."**

This city leadership's goal is to improve continually. Earlier this year, the City of Pelham partnered with the nationally recognized ETC Institute to conduct mail and online surveying. The goal is to gauge citizen satisfaction and perceptions of our local government and better understand community priorities. Citizen input gathered during the survey will help inform budget priorities and shape policy decisions.

This survey is mailed to randomly selected citizens every three years. Resident opinions are an important component of the City's long-range planning and investment decisions.

The survey is mailed to a random sample that is representative of the citizens in our community and was informed by the latest U.S. Census data. Moving forward, the Citizen Survey will be conducted at regular intervals and will be a regular part of the City's planning processes. It will also help city leadership measure where certain areas have improved or where attention may be needed.

We value citizen engagement and intend to use survey results to make important long-range planning and investment decisions. Those who received surveys gave opinions on the City's quality of life, including residential and commercial development, public safety, mobility, management, and recreational programs.

Once complete, a report on the survey findings will be available on our website. A representative from ETC will also make a presentation to the Mayor and City Council.





# YARD DEBRIS PICK-UP

## YOUR FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ANSWERED BY AMWASTE

The City of Pelham is six months into its contract with Amwaste for trash collection and bulk pickup. Feedback has been overwhelmingly positive, however, we understand some of you may still have questions since some of the guidelines for pickup are different from what you are accustomed to. We took some of the most frequently asked questions to Amwaste for answers.

### Q: "Will we still have heavy trash day twice a year?"

A: Instead of two specific days per year, bulk waste is now picked up year-round. There are two types of bulk waste: brown/white waste and green waste. Brown/white bulk waste includes items such as furniture, mattresses, washer/dryers, etc., and must be scheduled. Green waste includes large limbs, large amounts of bagged leaves, etc. Bulk green waste is automatically collected on a ten-day cycle, however, it can be scheduled. The easiest way to schedule any pick-up is via the Request Tracker.

### Q: "For just a few bags of leaves, do I have to schedule a pickup through the Request Tracker?"

A: No. Small piles of bagged leaves, grass clippings, and small bundles of limbs are picked up during your first pick-up each week. Items must be less than two cubic yards, and each item can be no heavier than 50 pounds. Put as much of it in your trash cart as possible. Any additional bags should be placed beside the trash cart.

### Q: "Why do I need to place my items at the curb before I request a bulk waste pickup?"

A: There are two reasons for this request: First - when we receive the request, there is a good chance Amwaste may have drivers in the area and can dispatch them immediately or by the end of the day. Second - Amwaste may be on its ten-day cycle in the area and can gather the items along with large green waste bulk piles. That is why it is important to already have the items on the curb. Also, pickup requests are managed first thing the next morning, if not the same day. The request will be honored no later than the second business day (brown/white waste) from when the request is made.

## Quick Facts

### Amwaste Guidelines

#### 1st pickup of the week:

- Everything collected is sent to the landfill.
- This includes bagged leaves & yard clippings. Please put as much as possible in the cart. Extra items should be placed beside the cart.

#### 2nd pickup of the week:

- Everything collected is sent to Repower South for recycling.
- There's no need to sort your items.
- Do NOT include yard clippings or bagged leaves on the second pick-up.

Additional information can be found on the city website:

**[www.pelhamalabama.gov](http://www.pelhamalabama.gov)**



# INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS

BY: AINSLEY ALLISON



Great progress has been made in the last six months on a number of construction and infrastructure improvement projects around the city despite the unprecedented challenges facing the construction industry. Contractors are still grappling with supply chain shortages and delays. Even so, projects that are still underway are on schedule.

## City Hall Renovation

Renovations at Pelham City Hall have certainly caught people's attention in the last few months, as some demolition began on the building exterior. Brick was ripped up across the front entrance in order to make accessibility improvements. The white porch columns and railing were removed and will be replaced. Work to replace the roof began in mid-May and is expected to be completed this summer. The most visible change is the roofline. The cupola was removed in order to make improvements.

Inside the building, framing is complete on the main level, and electrical, fiber, and AV cabling has been completed. On the lower level, structural modifications were needed. The City Council Chamber, which was previously on the main level, will now be on the lower level and accessed from the back courtyard. To open up the space, two structural columns were replaced by two giant, 3,600 pound beams.

The original building dates back to 1974 and was expanded in 1987. Acting City Engineer Chris Cousins said some of the challenges workers have faced are typical of older buildings that have been modified over the years.

"Existing systems like plumbing and mechanical have to be relocated and modified to accommodate a new interior layout and building use. This can create a challenge when existing systems vary from the original construction plans."

André Bittas, Director of Development Services and Public Works said the biggest benefit to Pelham residents will be the ease of having most city services and staff housed in one building. Several of the spaces downstairs will be available to the public for use for meetings and community events after business hours.



## New Fire Station No. 3 Fully Operational

Firefighters and residents alike are happy the new Fire Station No. 3 is now fully operational. With the relocation to the \$2.5 million dollar facility, strategically located on County Road 11 and CR 334, Pelham Fire Chief Mike Reid said residents can expect two major benefits.

"We have seen tremendous growth in the County Road 11 and County Road 36 areas, and this will help us serve those citizens better with quicker response times. Many of these homes were farther than five miles from the old Fire Station 3. This means homeowners paid a higher insurance premium because of the distance. Moving Fire Station 3 down County Road 11 will put most of our residences within five miles and will yield a better premium."

At over 13,200 square feet, the new station will have room to house specialty equipment, in addition to the engine company. A brush truck, hazmat unit, and foam trailer can be easily stored in the four double-length bays.

"The personnel at this station also perform service on our SCBAs (self-contained breathing apparatus), gas monitors, and hazmat equipment. They need a large space for these duties. We have room to grow at this station," said Reid.

## Water Meter Infrastructure Upgrades

A \$3 million investment by the City of Pelham will increase the accuracy and efficiency of reading water meters and upgrade the equipment to modern radio technology.

"The current meter reading system is a completely manual system requiring significant man-hours every month to read meters," said Chris Cousins, acting City Engineer. "The existing system does not capture data in between meter reads. The new system will allow meters to be read in significantly less time, allowing water system personnel to be deployed to other necessary tasks."

Cousins said the new meters are read using a "drive-by" system. Water personnel will drive the routes in a vehicle equipped with a radio receiver. The receiver communicates with the new meter and downloads the meter data as the truck passes by. It will no longer be necessary for a meter reader to visit each meter on the system.

For the average Pelham water customer, the new system reduces the possibility of human error in meter reading and will provide better reading accuracy.

The data collected will also allow system personnel to better identify leaks occurring on the customer side of the meter," said Cousins. "Additional data will also be collected allowing water system management to better analyze consumption demands and perform leak audits, among other things."



Work began in late February for homeowners and businesses along the Highway 261 corridor. The project is broken down into phases and is still on track to be completed in August. For the majority of customers, there will be no disruption in water service, and most work will be done within the existing meter box with no damage to surrounding yards and landscaping.

As with any project, there could be instances where a broken meter box or other deficiency is discovered. In that case, the City and/or the contractor will notify the resident or business before work is performed.

"We will do our best to minimize disruptions and any other inconveniences related to this work," said Project Manager Andrew Golden.

Contractor vehicles will be marked, and city inspectors will monitor the work. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Andrew Golden at 205.822.0387.

## 2022 Street Paving Schedule

In May, the Pelham City Council approved a contract for street paving in 2022. Streets were selected from the City's five-year paving plan using evaluations on condition, usage, and street ratings.

Streets being paved in 2022 include:

- Oak Forest Drive
- Oak Forest Trail
- Oak Forest Way
- Whitetail Run
- Grey Oaks Court
- Grey Oaks Lane
- High Crest Road
- High Hampton Drive
- High Hampton Lane
- Elizabeth Drive
- Havenview Drive
- Saddle Run



# DEVELOPMENT UPDATE

## WHAT'S HAPPENING WHERE DIRT IS MOVING

Major development is happening at two of the city's most visible gateways and along its busiest corridors. It's an exciting time for our city, and we hope residents and visitors alike will share in that excitement.

### Oak Mountain Trail Development Site

In October 2021, the City acquired an eleven-acre site for the purpose of creating a multi-use commercial development project. The City has already entered into an agreement to transfer four acres via a land sale, to a known entity for the construction and development of a new Tractor Supply retail store. Part of that agreement involved the City doing work to make that entire property pad ready, meaning that all clearing and grading are complete, and it is ready for construction.

In late March, the City announced it would accept Requests for Proposals (RFP) for the acquisition and development of the remaining seven acres.

Specifically, the City desires the development of a 100-140 key hotel offering amenities such as but not limited to, a restaurant, fitness room, and pool. The hotel would be built on approximately three-and-one-half acres along the northern portion of the project site. The intent for the remaining acreage is the development of retail and/or restaurant spaces. The deadline for developers to submit proposals is June 28, 2022.

### The Canopy

Just a few weeks ago, the developers of The Canopy announced a new anchor tenant. Birmingham-based Mountain High Outfitters will take over the iconic log cabin, which is visible from Interstate 65 and sits at the corner of State Park Road and Amphitheatre Rd.

"This amazing opportunity to continue to foster the active and outdoor lifestyle is something I value and am beyond excited to be a part of," said Christopher Groom, Founder, CEO, and Owner of Mountain High.

"We will have a unique footprint in the cabin off the interstate, and our offerings will include more paddle sports from kayaks, paddleboards, and floats to the hiking and trail running items needed to enjoy the area, as well as many of your favorite everyday lifestyle items. We look forward to creating an even stronger community and hosting a myriad of events from the new cabin location," Groom added.





## Caliber Collision

Construction is underway for a new location of Caliber Collision on Highway 31, adjacent to The Little Tomato. Caliber Collision is a Texas-based company with locations in 40 states. According to the company's website, Caliber Collision strives to improve the image of the automotive service experience. It's also a group that is well-known for its commitment to community outreach, and regularly hosts food drives and supports community needs.

According to Michael Simon, Economic Director for the City of Pelham, the City worked extensively with Caliber Collision on the design of the building. "During the planning process, the business went through an extensive architectural design review with the Building Department and is subject to all of the requirements of the ordinances governing the corridor overlay district."

## Campus 124

Pelham's newest dining option is open for business. Half Shell Oyster House, is located inside Campus 124 on Highway 31. Kelsey Griffin, Marketing Director for the Gulfport, Mississippi-based restaurant group, said the Pelham location will bring unique design, atmosphere, and cuisine to the city. She described the ambiance as "opening the doors to the French Quarter when you walk in".

Griffin said the Campus No. 124 space provides an exciting and very interconnected space with the surrounding businesses. "Moving into a development like this is a first for us, and we are excited to see how the community will embrace the activity here." She also said that the restaurant is committed to supporting local nonprofit organizations, and community events.

## New Growth on Huntley Parkway

Two new developments are planned for Huntley Parkway. The land is already being cleared for the Huntley Park subdivision, which is directly across from the Grand Reserve at Pelham entrance. The proposal includes 37 high-end townhomes.

"The proposed development fills a 'gap' in the residential home shortage in the City of Pelham," according to the developers, and will "further complement and enhance the overall community."

Further down, a mixed-use development featuring luxury apartments, retail and green space will be built on 28 acres at the corner of Huntley Parkway and County Road 11. This development will be on the same side of the road as the Grand Reserve and will extend from near the apartment complex down to County Road 11.



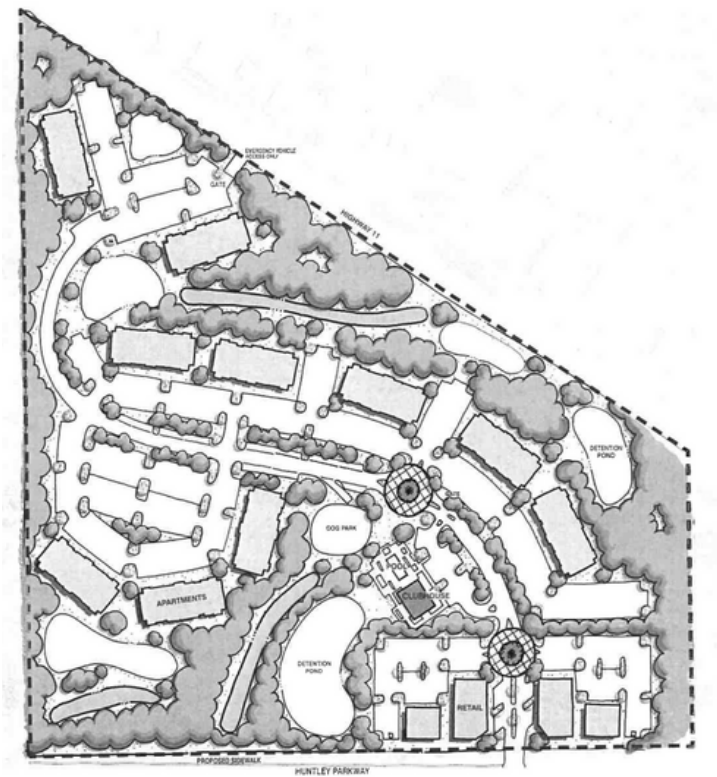


Although land hasn't been cleared yet, the proposal by the Hall Group out of Dothan includes 280 units and approximately 21,000 square feet of neighborhood retail space.

Gary Hall originally developed The Huntley Apartments over ten years ago and was instrumental in working with the City of Pelham to construct Huntley Parkway. The Hall Group has over 30 years of multifamily development and construction experience. They currently own and operate approximately 4,500 apartment units in five states.

"The development provides for a millennial professional lifestyle," the Hall Group told city leadership. The apartment complex is planned as a gated community, with the average monthly rent expected to be over \$1,200.00. In addition to luxury finishes, the development will feature several amenities including a resort-style pool, a fitness facility, a package delivery concierge, a cyber café, a dog spa, a dog park, a cabana, and outdoor grilling spaces. The vision of this development is to foster a lively, walkable neighborhood and neighborhood retail area. Developers hope the walkability factor will reduce the need for vehicular trips, and provide a unique place for people to live, work, shop, and play.

A preliminary traffic study was conducted on the intersections in the area, along with the proposed site access points. Researchers said the additional cars added due to this new development will not significantly impact the level of service of the intersections that were studied. Additional traffic studies will be conducted as needed.



### Two Plans for Welborn Street Property

Residents will soon notice some changes to the 4.5+ acre property at the corner of Pelham Parkway and Welborn Street, near the Shelby Mart Shopping Center. The City of Pelham recently sold 2.4 acres at the rear of the property to ProcessBarron for an expansion. The Commercial Development Authority (CDA) owns the remaining 2.3 acres and has plans for that portion of the property.

ProcessBarron is a Pelham-based industrial solutions company that currently operates in two locations: an adjacent facility at 2270 Welborn Street and a construction division located on Pardue Road. With space at a premium for both locations, and armed with a new strategy for long-term growth, ProcessBarron plans to build a 30,000 square-foot warehouse along with 10,000 square feet of office space at the expansion property on Welborn Street.

Once completed, the company will consolidate several distribution centers in other parts of the southeast and move those operations to Pelham. ProcessBarron anticipated at least 25-30 jobs will be created over the next few years. As a result of the acquisition, the Woodland Mobile Home Park was relocated.

The CDA is in the process of conducting environmental assessments on the front 2.3 acres facing Pelham Parkway. A used car lot and gas station used to operate on that stretch of property. This must be done prior to the demolition of existing structures on the property and preparing the site for a suitable developer. The site preparation phase should take approximately three to six months. Michael Simon, Economic Development Director for the City of Pelham said the CDA wants to be very intentional with this development.

"Ideally, we'd like for this to be a destination-type development, and the CDA is looking for the right developer to achieve that goal."





# FEMALES ON THE FRONT LINE

BY: GINA WOMACK



Heroes don't always wear capes. Sometimes they wear a badge or turnout gear. Sometimes they answer the call at times when we are most in need.

We recently sat down with three women who protect the City of Pelham each day. Traditionally, women did not always have opportunities to serve as first responders, but society has changed, and today more women fill roles in police and fire departments and emergency dispatch centers across the nation.

**"Keep Going. We've got this."**

Lieutenant Eliska Click | Pelham Fire Dept.

Lieutenant Eliska Click wore a big smile as her mother pinned her new badge on her uniform during a recent Pelham Fire Department ceremony that celebrated newly-promoted personnel. Beside them, a beaming little boy looked on with pride. Lt. Click is the department's first female officer. The road she had to travel to reach that milestone was not very easy, nor was it smooth.

Eliska Click knew she wanted to be a firefighter, but as a college student and walk-on softball player at Liberty University, Click decided to study criminal justice, simply because she had never seen a female firefighter. After graduating with her degree, she was on her final interview for a job with the Alpharetta, Georgia Police Department when a personal matter sent her to California for a new life. She never pursued a career in law enforcement after that.

Click found herself back in Alabama when she was in her late 20s. With the desire to be a firefighter still on her mind, Click went to basic EMT school at night while working full time. "I still wanted to be a firefighter, but I wasn't sure I would be able to withstand the physical demands, and I thought a career as an EMT would satisfy the desire to be on the scene helping others."

Although she became a basic EMT in 2008, Click still felt a career as a firefighter was her calling. It was a realization born of a tough time in life that put Click firmly on a journey to pursue her dream.



"My personal life changed, and I got married. My son was born in 2011. The marriage failed quickly, and I found myself a single mom, working full time, on food stamps and WIC. I clearly remember the day when I was at my wit's end, tired of living paycheck to paycheck. My 18-month-old son Daniel was running around the living room in a white onesie, unbuttoned, so it was dangling behind him. He had a wooden spoon in his hand and was babbling and banging on my pots and pans. That was the moment I knew I wanted better. I wanted health insurance and vacation time so I could take Daniel to Disney World. I pulled out my computer and a fresh notebook and Googled 'Firefighting in Alabama'. I found a rookie school starting in two months in Prattville."

From there, Click went into overdrive, completing prerequisites, and trying to figure out how to finance her schooling. "I had about \$5,000 of equity in my home. I pulled it out, sat down with my best friends and my parents, and made a schedule for Daniel's care. But I was unsure. I would be gone for two and three nights at a time. Daniel was little, and I asked myself if I would mess him up by being gone. The rookie school was ten weeks." Then a trusted confidant gave her some life-changing advice. "I reached out to Lisa Phillips, my wise friend, business owner, and mentor. Her words were, 'Go now. He won't remember you being gone, but if you wait, it will be harder the older he gets.'"

So Click signed up and started working on the physical aspects of the challenge ahead, preparing herself to take the CPAT (Candidate Physical Aptitude Test).

"I sat down with my dad and brother, both military men who served our country in the U.S. Marine Corps. I wanted to get the low down on how to be successful in a career made up of mostly men. They were honest. I would have to keep my head down and work hard. I had a difficult path ahead, but I believed I could be successful."

Great things do not come easy, and the obstacles started to mount. Prattville canceled their rookie school, and the next available school was in Muscle Shoals, which was two and a half hours from her home in south Shelby County. Still, Click signed up. She failed her first attempt at the CPAT, and had only enough time to take the test one more time. If she did not pass, she could not attend that session of rookie school. "I trained harder, got some help, and changed the way I was training. I passed!"

Click started rookie school in 2013. She was the only female, and at 35, was the oldest in her class. "I had prepared myself mentally and figured by week three I would want to quit. To be completely transparent, on the morning of day three, before I had to be 'on my line' at attention, I called my dad crying. I missed Daniel, and every inch of my body was sore from the training. Even the hardest days working on



the 350-acre farm I grew up on didn't compare to how sore I was. I even felt like my hair hurt!"

Click's father wisely advised her to stick it out for three more days and see how she felt after the weekend. He knew that she might feel differently after she had a chance to see Daniel and recharge.

"I showed up Monday morning with my toes on my line, at attention, and I never missed a day. I drove back and forth at least one night a week to hold Daniel and eat dinner. I would leave at 4:00 a.m. the next morning to get back on my line, standing at attention. "I dropped Daniel off for several days at a time and cried a lot on my way to rookie school. But my friends and family always said, "We've got this. Keep going! They still tell me this today."





Although rookie school was grueling, Click said she thrived in the environment. "The requirements are the same for both male and female candidates. When you're in full firefighter gear, no one can tell if you're male or female. If you couldn't complete the training, you had to repeat the rotation. No rookie school instructor wants to send out a candidate who is not ready because it could cost a life."

Click went home and continued her job as an ambulance EMT while she looked for a job with a fire department.

She interviewed and accepted a job with the Athens, Alabama Fire Department. "I canceled food stamps and WIC, and with my first paycheck, Daniel and I went out to eat and bought groceries. It was a big deal." But Athens was two hours away from her home and support system. "I had to leave for work at 4:20 a.m. In my mind, I committed to Athens for a year, with hopes of finding a job closer to home."

Click had tested with the Pelham Fire Department several times but never received a call. Eventually, she heard Pelham was testing again.

"I got the book and studied. I scored high enough, and by this time I had firefighter certifications under my belt." After passing the physical agility test, Click got an interview and landed the job.

"I remember that day clearly. I always will. It was bittersweet to leave Athens. I was the first female firefighter in Athens, and the guys took it in stride. My crew accepted me and supported me. To this day, I still reach out to them for advice. I wanted to work for Pelham because it was close to home, the salary was one of the best in the state, and the department supports continued training."

Immediately upon her move to Pelham, Click started planning for her next career step and set a goal of becoming a lieutenant when she was eligible. However, another challenge was lurking around the corner.

"Soon after my first anniversary with Pelham, I was in an accident during a rope class and severely injured my knee. It's called the 'Terrible Triad', often seen in football injuries. Mine was a bit worse. The orthopedic doctor wasn't sure I would ever walk normally again. I had torn my ACL, MCL, and both menisci, and almost broke my tibia. I had a very long road to recovery."

After surgery and eight months of therapy, Click was back to work on the engine. "Again my family and friends kept telling me, 'We've got this, keep going.' Firefighter Ken Mays anonymously showed up at my house to cut my grass and even left groceries on my porch. For months, I didn't know it was him."

Click set her sights on paramedic school. "At the time it wasn't a requirement for promotion or employment, but I didn't want to lead a team without having the same training they had. Daniel was in kindergarten when I started paramedic school. Wow, was that hard – a tough schedule, keeping up with home life, and working full time. Again, my Pelham Fire family, especially Lieutenant Thomas Nails and Fire Medic Nic Bolton, encouraged me and helped me study. My friends and family said, 'Keep going, we've got this.' They would pick Daniel up for a few hours and they would also provide meals. I finished medic school and passed the National Registry. Finally, I was a Fire Medic."

Next up was the lieutenant exam. "The test was hard for me. I couldn't look at the scores when they came out. I was standing in my kitchen with Daniel and some friends, so I had someone else look. I ranked #2 on the list." With the chance for a promotion, Click prepared for her interview. "On February 12, 2022, Chief Mike Reid called me into his office. He said, 'Are you ready to be a lieutenant?' I said, 'I sure am.' He said, 'Good because I'm promoting you.'"



As the first female officer in the Pelham Fire Department and one of only two female fire medics on staff, Click said there are some essential things to keep in mind.

"The key is building trust with the team. To do that, the guys have to see that I can do the job. I have to have enough confidence in myself and my decisions to not get my crew hurt."

Click also acknowledged having a female enter the fire station environment is probably just as much of a challenge for her male counterparts as it is for her.

"They have taken it in stride, and I am conscientious of the adjustments we all have to make to be successful. My crews have always included me, encouraged me, and trained me as needed."



"The most dangerous thing I've heard a female say when showing interest in the firefighting/paramedic field is, 'I'm going to show those boys how it's done.' That's just not an accurate way of thinking. Are some females equipped to be successful in this career? Yes! But we must do it with grace, strength, and professionalism. We don't work, think or process the same as a man. God made us different, and that's a great thing. I often get called upon to talk to the family when we have a death in the field. I often help with getting a female dressed or ready to get on the stretcher because they're more comfortable with another female. The same is true with our male patients. They're more comfortable with a male fire medic."

Click describes herself as a very traditional woman at heart, even though she's in a career that is non-traditional for females. "The guys might break down the door, and the girls might turn the knob and walk on in. There's a time and place for both. I believe the right female for a fire department can be an asset."

Lieutenant Click is a very humble person, and she wanted to make sure her biggest supporters, the ones who continually said, "Keep going, we've got this", were recognized as key factors in her journey so far. "This dream and goal would never be a reality without these people. They're the unsung, unrecognized champions, and I'm thankful for them daily: My mom and dad, Eric and Willy McGrew, Tanya Tortorici, Charlotte Bryant, Jenny King, Beth Rickey, Hannah Rickey, Amanda Speilman, Aaron Walker, Lisa Phillips, and Retta Hood."

## The First on the Front Line

Jeanie Davis | Communications & Records Manager

It's often said that the person at the receiving end of a 9-1-1 call is the "first" first responder. This is true of the experienced team at the Pelham emergency dispatch center. Jeanie Davis is the Communications and Records Manager for Pelham Dispatch. She put the importance of a dispatcher's job in perspective.

"When citizens call into our dispatch office, it can be the worst day of their life. When we answer the phone, we have to remain calm in any situation and be there for that person no matter what's going on at that moment."

Davis' career choice was influenced at a young age for an important reason. "Growing up I had a passion for helping others, and I knew that I wanted to pursue something that would allow me to do just that." Davis started down her chosen career path as a high school student. "A few friends asked me to join the Police Cadet Program at the Irondale Police Department. They introduced me to the dispatch office during my training and I was intrigued by the dispatchers' work. I knew then this was where I wanted to be."





During her days as a cadet, Davis volunteered in the Irondale dispatch center. Her skills for staying calm under pressure caught the attention of her supervisors, and she was hired as a part-time employee. Davis came to Pelham in 1997 and worked her way up to the position she holds today. "Being from Trussville, I did not know much about the agency (Pelham) when I first applied. Over time, I met several Pelham dispatchers while working for Irondale. When a position became available in Pelham, I applied. The many people I met while working for Pelham made me feel like family, and this is where I wanted to stay."

Like any dispatcher, Davis has experienced both joy and heartache as she takes calls from citizens. "The fact that we have to remain calm in any situation is something that is learned over time. We have guide cards to help us through most situations, but it is all about customer service and making sure we provide help to anyone who calls our center.

"In my career, I have many stories that stand out – some happy and some sad. What stands out the most is seeing our citizens support our police and fire departments through the years I've been here. Since starting my career 25 years ago, we have lost several police officers and firefighters. Seeing our citizens come out and support our city has been a very eye-opening experience to know that we are loved and supported."

When asked about women in positions that were once dominated by males, Davis quickly pointed out that the necessary skill set for a dispatcher is universal.

"I do not feel gender is a factor (in this job) as much as being assertive, yet empathetic in an emergency. It takes a remarkable person to do a dispatcher's work, and it is not suited for everyone. However, I do feel as a female in the workplace, we have to be very confident in our decisions. You have to be knowledgeable of your position. I have learned that you need both male and female mentors, and I feel this has helped me be successful."

One of Davis' mentors was her Cadet leader at the Irondale Police Department. "Doug McBee had a passion for law enforcement and a desire to help people, which started me down the right path to pursue my career." Davis said upon coming to Pelham, another mentor was a great influence. "Teresa Cohen was our dispatch supervisor. She took me under her wing and provided me with tools to help me achieve my goals in this line of work."

Davis offered a bright outlook for young women who might want to pursue this career path. "Emergency dispatch has never been more important. While I always believe women can accomplish anything they set their minds to, a career in dispatch can be both challenging and rewarding. It's never boring, and there's a sense of accomplishment you just can't get anywhere else. Have confidence and speak up. Watch and mirror your successful coworkers and you'll go far."





## A Sweet Life of Service

Officer Iliana Hayakahua | Pelham Police Dept.

"When life gives you lemons, make lemonade," said Officer Iliana Hayakahua with a laugh. Although those lemons have since yielded gallons of sweetness, a young Hayakahua found her life in chaos and was unable to move forward with her plans for a career in the military. Today, she is one of two women who serve as officers within the Pelham Police Department. "God had different plans for me, and it has all worked out," she said.

Hayakahua was certain from the time she was in ninth grade that she would join the military. "All through high school, I knew what I wanted to do. I had taken the ASVAB test and I even knew the job I would have once I joined. I was set to be a crew chief on a helicopter." Then, Hayakahua became pregnant at a young age. "The military could have been an option, but I didn't want to sign my daughter over. I also didn't want to leave her. I realized it was time to grow up, so I gave it some thought and decided that a career in law enforcement would be similar to the military."

Hayakahua was turned down by several law enforcement agencies due to her young age. One day, the City of Bessemer gave her a shot. Hayakahua said the police academy is no easy task, and it is very competitive. She said to become a police officer, women have to pass the same exam and the same physical tests as their male counterparts to land a job.

Even though she's always been an active person and worked out regularly, Hayakahua said the physical test and obstacle course were challenging. Candidates are required to do 25 sit-ups and 22 pushups, all within a minute.

"When you hear the numbers, it doesn't seem like much, but your pushups only count if you touch the fist of the person doing the testing. You have to touch their fist and come up, and that counts as one. Usually, for the guys, the pushups are easier. For females, the sit-ups. I've always said that's just the way God made us."

As a new police officer, and especially as a female, Hayakahua said she felt she had to prove herself just a little bit more.

"I guess I just tried to earn the trust of the guys by proving that I had their back and showing them that I could be counted on. I found myself wanting to be part of the intense situations just to show them I could do it. I realized it was all about earning the trust of my fellow officers."



After working for the Bessemer Police Department for eight years, Hayakahua was hired by the Pelham Police Department. Although she loved her job in Bessemer, she said Pelham allows a better schedule for her family. With a husband who also works in law enforcement, the couple would often find themselves on opposite schedules. "Sometimes date night was breakfast," Hayakahua laughed. "On patrol, we work 12-hour shifts with rotating weekends off. It breaks up my schedule to allow me to spend time with my children. It almost feels like you have more time off than with a regular eight-hour shift."

In her almost six years patrolling the streets of Pelham, Hayakahua said her fellow squad officers have been like a second family. They've been through some very difficult times together, but also good times.



"When one of us is going through something, everyone gathers around. You know you're not alone. Our families get together and our kids hang out. I'm friends with the wives." Two of Hayakahua's three children were born while she was working for Pelham. "I was allowed to stay on light duty for a few months because I was nursing. Even when I came back to patrol, the guys knew when it was my time, and they offered to pick up calls if I was 'busy'. Some departments wouldn't have allowed me that luxury. I will always be grateful for that."

When asked if she ever thinks about the dangers of the job, Hayakahua said she thinks about complacency, because complacency kills. "I'm always aware of my surroundings just to make sure I will go home safe. When I file a report in the field, I usually have another officer meet me while I complete the report, or I simply go back to the police station. I'm not going to allow someone to have a chance to catch me off guard while I'm sitting in a car typing up a report on the computer. Even though we live in a city where crime is low, you still have to stay on your guard. Mentally, I'm always reviewing my actions."

Hayakahua's long-term goal is to one day become a detective or supervisor. "Pelham has never had a female in these roles. I have a long way to go before retirement, so maybe I'll make it." She acknowledged the process is very competitive, especially in Pelham where even new hires come in with 5-10 years of experience.

In the meantime, Officer Hayakahua fulfills several key roles within the department. Not only is she bilingual, but she's one of seven field training officers (FTO), and she enjoys community outreach. She's part of the bike unit and Honor Guard.

In her role as an FTO, Hayakahua works with new officers to teach them the ropes in Pelham. "Pelham's FTO program (for officers just out of the academy) lasts 20 weeks, and it's one of the most difficult. We have to make sure the new officers are doing things the right way because the job comes with liability."

As an officer who is fluent in Spanish, Hayakahua enjoys working with the Hispanic community in Pelham. "I think it's important to be able to communicate with them so they can feel they have a connection. They're able to see someone who looks like them and speaks the language." She said she has a good relationship with the Pelham Fire Department as well. "When I hear on the radio that they're going to an area with a large Hispanic population, dispatch will sometimes send me because I can speak with the person or the family, and get quicker care for that person."





Hayakahua herself is from a family of immigrants, one with several ethnicities. Her paternal grandfather is Japanese, and her maternal grandfather is Greek. Her dad is Mexican and Japanese, and her mom is Greek and Salvadorian. "Growing up, I was terrified of the police. I saw a police car and I would cry in fear. We moved to Alabama from Texas when I was eight years old. I met Officer Jones, the Dare officer at Gwin Elementary. He was always involved with the kids, and I built a connection with him. I realized he was a good guy, a nice guy I could talk with."

"A few months later, I was walking with my dad in our apartment complex, and a police car pulled up. The officer said, 'I need somebody that can speak Spanish!' I said, 'I speak Spanish!' and I jumped in his car. My dad was like, 'where are you going?' and he jumped in the car as well. We were taken to an active scene with police cars and medics, and they were yelling at this guy, '¡Párate! ¡Párate!', or 'Stand up!' which he was doing. They wanted him to sit down. I looked at the officer and said, 'You know you're telling him to stand up?' So the officer said, 'Tell him to sit down.' The man turned out to be someone my dad knew. He was having a seizure, so they were able to get him medical help."

"I was in third grade and had just started to speak very broken English. I was born in a part of Texas where everyone spoke Spanish. Here in Alabama, it was a culture shock. I was the only Hispanic kid in my entire school. There were no Mexican stores. I couldn't find my favorite candy. There were few Mexican restaurants around at the time. I went to doctor appointments with my parents to translate, even though I could barely speak English myself. I did enroll in ESL classes, but the teacher did not speak Spanish well. It was as if we were trying to teach each other!"

Officer Hayakahua likes to mentor young people who are considering a career in law enforcement. She especially likes to talk with young women who want to join the ranks. "Chief Pat Cheatwood's wife gave me the name of a young lady who was interested in law enforcement. I called her and gave her a tour of the police department. I encouraged her to stay in shape, even after you land the job. I told her the job is stressful, and it's important to stay healthy, both emotionally and physically. I let her know that you have to always keep up with your mental health when you're in this field."

"I will say the one thing I appreciate is that to get into the law enforcement field, the process is the same for both men and women. I'm glad there's not a different standard for males and females. In the future, I think the difference will come later on in a woman's career. I think it will be easier for females to move up, as long as they do the right thing."





# ACTIVITY GUIDE



MONDAY | JUNE 27

5:45 PM

## Family Kickball Night

All ages are welcome to participate in this night of fun at Pelham City Park. Stay after the games for pizza and popsicles. The cost is \$5 for four family members, \$2 for each additional member.

TUESDAY | JULY 5, AUGUST 2, SEPTEMBER 6

6:00 PM

## 80s Retro Movie Nights

After another Manic Monday, it's totally tubular Tuesday! Join us at the Pelham Public Library for 80s Retro Movie Night. All movies are rated PG to PG-13 but may not be appropriate for all audiences. Contact the library for titles.

JUNE & JULY

## Summer Dance Camps

Pelham Parks and Recreation has partnered with Tippi Toes® Dance Company to offer these fun and exciting summer camps at our Rec Center. The hours are 9:00 am-12:00 pm each day.

Hip Hop & Flip Flops

June 27-July 1

Ages: 6-12

Under the Sea

July 25-July 29

Ages: 3-7



# ACTIVITY GUIDE

WEDNESDAY | JULY 6

9:00 AM

## Weather Awareness with James Spann

ABC 33/40 Chief Meteorologist James Spann will discuss the science and psychology of the weather world. Active Adults may register at the Pelham Senior Center.

THURSDAY | JULY 7

10:00 AM

## Senior World Games

Active Adults are invited to participate in our version of The World Games at the Pelham Senior Center. There will be Wii bowling, cornhole, team games, and more! Pizza and snacks will be provided.

SATURDAY | JULY 9

10:00 AM

## The Pelham Games

A community-wide celebration of The World Games. The Pelham Games will take place at Pelham City Park. Games include cornhole, football toss, baseball toss and a dizzy bat competition.

WEDNESDAY | JULY 13

9:30 AM

## Popsicles on the Playground

Join us at the Pelham City Park playground for a cool treat and fun in the sun. This free event is for children ages one to five.



WEDNESDAY | JUNE 15 - JULY 6

2:00 PM

## World Wildlife Wednesday

In honor of The World Games, Oak Mountain State Park is hosting this new programming series featuring live wild animals from around the world. Join us at the Oak Mountain Interpretive Center every Wednesday to meet slithery snakes, feathery owls, and wily lizards, and learn about their native habitat across the globe. These events are free with paid park admission.

TUESDAY | JULY 5

2:00 PM

## Mini World Games

Children 12 and under can learn about healthy exercise by participating in the Mini World Games led by Jeff State nursing students. This Library program will take place at the main park pavilion.





# ACTIVITY GUIDE

THURSDAY | JULY 28

10:00 AM

## Grandparents Day Luau

Summertime always calls for a luau. Bring your grandchildren (ages 3-11) to the Pelham Senior Center for a fun-filled day. We will learn the basics of the Hula Dance, do the limbo, play bingo, make a craft and enjoy pizza.

WEDNESDAY | JULY 6 - JULY 27

10:00 AM

## Storytime in the Park

Join us at the pavilion in the City Park for stories, songs, and more along with a craft and a snack.

MONDAY | JULY 11

2:00 PM

## Crabby Bots

Children entering grades 6-12 are welcome to join us for this STEM robotics program from Jan Mattingly, the Science Lady!

SEPTEMBER 12 | 6:00 PM

## Family Night at the Library

Enjoy some family time in the library maker space! Parents/caregivers and children of all ages can come to get hands-on with fun STEM activities and enjoy a light dinner provided by the library. Registration is requested.

FRIDAY | AUGUST 26

5:30 PM

## Dog Days of Summer

Stop by the Pelham Dog Park and let your furry friends run and romp together during this special event on National Dog Day. Enjoy food trucks, live music, doggie pools, and a special treat for Fido.





# ACTIVITY GUIDE

SUNDAYS | MAY - AUGUST

2:00PM

## Junior Beginner Golf Clinics

These clinics are for children ages 6-13 and are a great way to introduce the game of golf to the little one in your life. Putting, chipping, full swing, and golf etiquette are covered.

JUNE - AUGUST

7:30 AM

## Summer Camp on Ice

Be part of the coolest summer camp around. Registration is currently open for Pelham Skate School's Camps on Ice at the Pelham Civic Complex & Ice Arena. Three sessions will be offered for children ages five to 13.

June 6-10      \$275

July 5-8        \$220

August 1-5     \$275

JUNE - AUGUST

## Summer Tennis Clinics

Tennis is for everybody! Check out the many Clinics offered at the Pelham Racquet Club.

3.0 & 3.5 Men's Clinic

Tuesdays at 5:30 pm

Beginner Clinic

Tuesdays 6:30 pm

Ladies Beginner Clinic

Wednesdays at 6:00 pm

3.0 & 3.5 Senior Ladies Clinic

Thursdays at 11:30 am

2.5 Ladies Clinic

Fridays 8:00 am

TUESDAYS | SEPTEMBER - NOVEMBER

6:00PM

## 8 Week Zero-to-5K

This eight-week training program created by a Road Runners Club of America (RRCA) certified coach will help you prepare for the Pelham Parks & Rec 5K race in November. Space is limited to 20 participants and meets at the outdoor volleyball pavilion.

TUESDAYS | SEPTEMBER

7:00PM

## 5K Race Seminars

All sessions will be led by licensed physical therapist Todd Howatt from Maximum Physical Therapy & Sports Wellness and certified running coach Kevin Washburn from Confident Runner.

Starting Safely & Choosing Footwear

September 13

Ages 14+

Strength Training for Runners

September 20

Ages 14+

The Psychology of Racing

September 27

Ages 14+

SATURDAY | AUGUST 6

10:00 AM

## Tennis Play Day

People of all ages and skill levels are invited to the Pelham Tennis Center to play for the day. Call 205.620.3380 to sign up.





# MAKE A DIFFERENCE

If you are passionate about serving others, you might be the right fit for our team.



## A PATH APART.

Come explore the opportunities we have to offer and set yourself apart.



## JOB OPPORTUNITIES BY DEPARTMENT

- Ballantrae Golf Club
- Development Services & Public Works
- Parks & Recreation
- Police Department
- Pelham Racquet Club





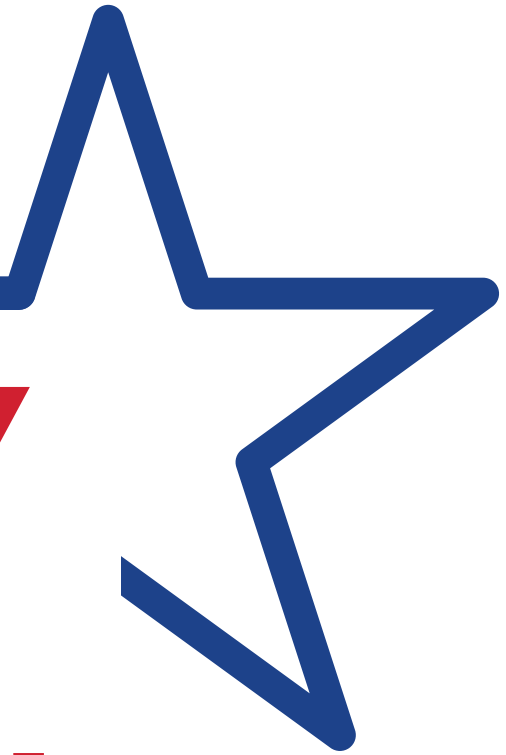


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# PRIMARY RUNOFF ELECTION



# JUNE 21, 2022

Find other important dates and  
information at [www.sos.alabama.gov](http://www.sos.alabama.gov)